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Date set for Grand Opening of Glen Miller Hall

By Verna deLeon
Public Relations

KESHENA – The College of Menominee Nation will be holding its 'Grand Opening and Dedication Celebration' on May 1, 1999. It will begin at 11:00 a.m. and will continue through out the afternoon as college students give tours of the building where classes are held and administrative offices are located. Celebration activities will include the dedication of the Glen T. Miller Hall and a traditional meal with entertainment by Marissa Tucker and Family.

Dr. Verna Fowler, President of the College, has declared that "this is not just a college celebration, but is a community celebration where all of the Menominee People are invited." "This is the College of Menominee Nation. Years ago the Menominee People spoke loud and clear that they wanted a college. It is their college and it proudly bears their name," said Fowler.

The college has many accom-

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U.S. Supreme Court refuses to revive Treaty Rights Lawsuit

By Robert Imrie
Associated Press

The Menominee Tribe was disappointed and "even dismayed" after the U.S. Supreme Court on Monday refused to revive a lawsuit that sought off-reservation hunting and fishing rights in Wisconsin based on an 1831 treaty, a tribal leader said.

The state's attorney general called the decision, which involved four treaties signed in 1831, 1836, 1848 and 1854, an extremely important ruling that affirms courts are not going to rewrite Indian pacts.

At issue was whether the 7,000-member Menominee Nation could hunt and fish on public lands involving millions of acres near Lake Michigan, Green Bay,

Lake Winnebago and parts of the Wisconsin River.

The tribe sued the state in 1995, maintaining its ancestors had been misled when they exchanged up to 10 million acres in a treaty for land in Minnesota. The Minnesota land eventually was traded for what is now the Menominee

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Return of sturgeon still a cause for celebration

by Mike Wilber, MNN

Saturday, April 17 - The annual sturgeon feast evokes many thoughts on Menominee history and the life ways - past, present, and future.

Sage smoke hung in the air in the Menominee Tribal School gym. The hum of conversation mixed with jingling bells as dancers prepared for grand entry and elders took their seats.

"Looks pretty sparse this year," Chad Waukechon, from the historic preservation dept., observed as we met. True, I thought, looking around. Not a big turnout.

Generations ago, entire bands of Menominee would gather, we are told, for the sturgeon harvest and feast at Keshena Falls. What an event that must have been - a replenishing of food stores depleted by a long winter. Imagine a

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MNN photo/Mike Wilber

Dave Nahwahquaw Grignon (right) leads a dance to an honor song carrying a gift of a taxidermic sturgeon, which was made after all the meal was taken from it. (L-r) Ron Pleshek, Bob Perez, and Tony Wilber were honored for their past and present roles in the ceremony and feast.

Governor signs Bill targeting 'Squaw' Names

HELENA (AP) – The word "squaw," considered a racial slur by some people, gradually would be removed from the names of state-owned sites, under a bill signed Friday by Gov. Marc Racicot.

The measure received overwhelming support from the Legislature this year after being killed in the 1997 session. The House passed the bill 92-8 and the Senate approved it 47-2.

Supporters of the bill said "squaw" is a derogatory word used

in referring to Indian woman and is interpreted by some people as a reference to female genitalia.

The word is in dozens of place names across Montana, including creeks, valleys and mountains.

House Bill 412 requires state agencies to prepare lists of places with the word as part of their name, and come up with other names. The new names would take

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BILL:

effect gradually, in the routine updating of maps and replacement of signs. In addition, the bill calls for Montana to formally request the US Geological Survey replace 'squaw' in names on future maps of the state.

The legislators voting against the bill were all Republicans: Sens. Jack Wells of Bozeman and Bob Keenan of Bigfork; and Reps. Darrel Adams of Columbia Falls, Peggy Arnott Bergsagel of Billings, Matt Brainard of Florence, Marian Hanson of Ashland, Rick Jore of Ronan, Betty Lou Kasten of Brockway, Scott Orr of Libby, and William Rehbein Jr. of Lambert.

LAWSUIT:

Nation Reservation in northeastern Wisconsin. The tribe contended the 1831 treaty with the federal government gave the tribe hunting and fishing rights until the president 'shall deem it expedient to extinguish their title.'

US District Judge Barbara Crabb in Madison dismissed the lawsuit, ruling that even if the United States misled the Menominees, the court could not rewrite a treaty. "Even treaties that are the product of bribery, fraud or duress are valid and must be enforced," Crabb said. Last November, the 7th US Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago upheld Crabb's decision.

Without comment Monday, the Supreme Court turned down the Menominees' arguments that it did not give up hunting and fishing rights in the treaty that exchanged all its land in Wisconsin for a reservation. Menominee Vice Chairman Wendell Askenette said the tribe was 'very disappointed and even dismayed' that it cannot get its day in court.

"We just felt that we were given a very quick shuffle here," he said in a telephone interview from Keshena, Wis. "We felt we were going to be given the opportunity to present our argument. We are disappointed we were not given the opportunity for justice after all these years."

Lawyers representing the Menominee argued that those treaties were not intended to cancel out Indians' hunting and fishing rights. They also said the lower courts should have given the tribe a chance to develop historical information on the Indians' understanding of the treaties when they were signed.

Wisconsin Attorney General James Doyle praised the high court's refusal to review the lawsuit. "This is a major victory for states like Wisconsin that believe treaties should be enforced according to their plain language," Doyle said in a statement issued in Madison. "We believe the Menominee were asking the courts to interpret the treaty as they would like it to have been written, not how it was actually written."

The treaty language was 'clear and unambiguous,' the attorney general said. Doyle said the 1848 treaty said that hunting and fishing will remain in place on the lands 'until such time as the land is surveyed and offered for sale.' The case is Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin vs. Thompson, 98-1306.

OPENING:

plishments to celebrate. After only six years, the college is a fully accredited institution of higher learning and is one of only three in the state that is a land grant institution. Since the college began, ninety (90) new jobs have been created, making the college one of the major employment entities on the Menominee Reservation. As the college grows, and it has grown tremendously over the past six years, more jobs will be created. "The College of Menominee Nation is becoming a major thrust to economic development here on the reservation," said Fowler.

During the celebration, the building that houses the college will be officially dedicated to the memory of the late Glen T. Miller. Miller was a resolute supporter of Menominee education and during his term as Menominee Tribal Chairman, he greatly encouraged and influenced the first movement toward making the Menominee College a reality. "Starting any business is a risk, but Glen took that risk without hesitation," said Fowler. "He worked with me preparing a budget to construct a building and then worked with me to prepare a budget to start the college. He cared about the education of the Menominee People," she said. "Glen had the desire, the courage, and the vision to make the college a reality. What could be more fitting then to honor his memory by naming the building after him," said Fowler.

Everyone is invited to join in the celebration, feast and entertainment.

STURGEON:

celebration of survival - shaking off the winter doldrums, all those Menominee 'bears' coming out of hibernation and into an explosion of life, feasting on the plentiful sturgeon. "I guess there's not a lot of hungry Menominees today," I said, coming out of my brief reverie.

Despite an apparently low turnout, the energy level of those in attendance was high. The feast this year was held in honor of the late Louis Cawtakasic Hawpetoss, who worked to make the sturgeon feast a reality again and helped to make it an annual event.

Dave Nahwahquaw Grignon, in his address to the ceremony, said he considered writing a speech for this, but decided to wing it, knowing that's the way Louis did it. The words, he said, should come from the heart. Nahwahquaw tipped his hat to Louis in comments like, "Louis wore many hats for the tribe. Some people didn't like him and others greatly respected him." And, "Louis was the one who said we should have some dancers and do the fish dance." Much of today's sturgeon

celebration is owed to Cawtakasic.

That morning, Nahwahquaw said he stopped by Keshena Falls to offer a prayer and tobacco. There, he said, he saw Kenew, an eagle. That, coupled with the previous night's show of northern lights, led him to believe everything today would be OK. "The spirits were looking forward to this day," he said. As long as he's director of historic preservation, he said, "This will be an annual event," even if he has to "beg, borrow, and steal" the money to do it.

Days before, the sturgeon were again brought to a holding pen where Chik'ney Creek empties into the Wolf River just below Keshena Falls. Young Menominee men from the MIHS Carpentry Apprenticeship program had the honor this year of putting the sturgeon into the creek. Orman Waukau, director of the program, also helped and watched with pride as his students carried out this new ritual. What they learned here, he said with satisfaction, is something that he can't teach. Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources provides 10 sturgeon. Every year they are put in Chik'ney Creek where people can view them for a while. Later that afternoon they are taken in preparation for the feast.

Dan Verhoeven of the DNR usually attends the annual ceremony, which he said reminds them of the history of the sturgeon and the Menominee people. He spoke a little about working with the people here to help establish a self sustaining sturgeon population above the Shawano dams. But, 'it may take generations for that to grow where a harvest could take place,' he said.

Ron Pleshek (who smokes the sturgeon for the feast), Bob Perez, and Tony Wilber were recognized for their role in the annual ceremony, which began in its present form seven years ago.

Wilber paid respect to Hawpetoss in a brief address. "Louis, being the generous man that he was, gives me credit for (the return of the sturgeon). But, Louis' gifts as negotiator accomplished this ceremony." Wilber said his goal seven years ago was to get the sturgeon over the dams so they could complete their ancient spawning run. "I didn't do what I set out to do. Louis accomplished this ceremony."

During 1997's sturgeon event, Louis said, "I give all the respect to these young men that started this out. They were willing to break the law, willing to go to jail, to test the treaty rights. They were also willing to negotiate. To them it meant regenerating a ceremony that went on for thousands of years."

And so the spring ritual continues today, albeit in its somewhat diminished form. No longer do Menominee rely on the sturgeon run for survival. But the annual sturgeon return still brings much anticipation, boosts the spirit, allows us to honor the great fish, and it's fun.

There are dances, honor songs, speakers, listeners, and children playing below the bleachers. The spirit of those in attendance still honor the sturgeon for what they have brought to the people

throughout Menominee history. It brings people together, some of which, as tribal vice-chairman and Five Clan Drum member Wendell 'Sim' Askenette said, we haven't seen all winter - elders, adults, and young ones.

So maybe it didn't matter that it was a small turnout. That's what Nell Lee Hawpetoss-Tiedemann believed. Nell and her Wees Nun Catering cooked the huge meal. "It doesn't matter how many are here, because you're all welcome," she said.